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OCI No. 2335/65

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
19 October 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Attempted Coup in Burundi

Early this morning Army units loyal to the king have reportedly defeated an attempted coup and dispersed unidentified dissident military elements. The Tutsi Prime Minister, Leopold Biha, was seriously wounded and is not expected to recover. The palace is reportedly encircled by loyal troops and the king now is safe in their custody. The situation is extremely confused and it is thus far impossible to determine the causes and protagonists.

1. [redacted]
junior army officers, dissatisfied with the pace of Africanization and promotion possibilities, have been working with dissident Hutu politicians to bring about a general uprising. The ranks of the dissatisfied army officers--primarily Hutus--recently have been swelled by the return of African officers studying abroad. These officers, are much better qualified than their superiors and desired the immediate Africanization of the army.

2. The army commander probably leading the loyal army units, Micombero, relies heavily on Belgian advisers but failed to follow through on their recent recommendations to discipline army officers openly dissatisfied with the pace of Africanization of the 1,225-man army. He has retained the king's confidence [redacted]

[redacted] Most of the army and the gendarmerie officer corps are Tutsi, and the majority of the troops are Hutus.

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3. The wounded Prime Minister, a Tutsi of royal blood and related to the king, formed a moderate coalition government on 29 September. His cabinet-- 6 Hutus and 5 Tutsis--was apparently acceptable to both ethnic groups, although the ethnic majority Hutus won an overwhelming victory in parliamentary elections last spring and had 23 of 31 seats in the assembly.

4. A leading Hutu plotter has been Gervais Nyangoma, considered to be a leading Hutu intellectual, extremely dissatisfied with the coalition cabinet. On the king's instructions, he had been excluded from all government offices, although he had also been a leading Hutu candidate for Prime Minister.

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6. Should Biha die, this would be the second Prime Minister to be assassinated in office this year. In January, a Hutu prime minister was assassinated by Tutsi extremists, reportedly financed and aided by Chinese Communists. Since that time, both Hutu and Tutsi extremists have continued their plotting to accede to power by violent means.

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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
Office of Current Intelligence

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